

A CALL TO COMMEMORATE.

157



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/calltocommemorat00cask>

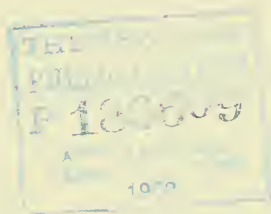
A CALL TO COMMEMORATE:
THE SEMI-CENTENARY
OF
GRACE CHURCH PARISH,
HONESDALE, PA.

A PREPARATORY SERMON,

BY
THE REV. TALIAFERRO F. CASKEY,
Rector.

HONESDALE, PA.:
A. GILBERT FORBES.
1881.





WILLIAMSPORT, PA.:
Gazette and Bulletin Printing House.

"Loving those roots that feed us from the past."

—LOWELL.

"Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age,
And prepare thyself to the search of their fathers,
For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.
Because our days upon earth are a shadow,
Shall not they teach thee and tell thee?"

—JOB viii., 8.

"The yearly course that brings this day about
Shall never see it, but a holy day."

SERMON.

This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

EXOD. xii., 2.

And ye shall hallow the Fiftieth Year. . . . It shall be a Jubilee unto you. . . . It shall be holy unto you.

LEV. xxv., 10, 12.



THESE divine injunctions to observe times and seasons were originally laid upon the Chosen People. They open up to our view a side of Hebrew life that is as picturesquely beautiful as it was wisely ordained. God taught his ancient Church by institutions, symbols and parables, and provided for a regular repetition of his instruction in periodically recurring days, and months, and years. These anniversaries of the founding of institutions and giving of laws, these memorials of signal deliverances and events, these regular returns of festivals and fasts, appealed to the Jewish imagination and quickened the Jewish conscience as no other form of communication could. By constant renewals first impressions were kept fresh. By perpetual replenishing the fire on these beautiful altars continued to glow.

Following in the line of the divine injunctions, the Hebrews taught themselves to remember important times and occurrences in private or national experiences by anniversary ob-

servances or visible memorial stones. Therefore we read of the altar of Moreh, the votive pillar of Bethel, the covenant stones of Mizpah, the memorial heap at the Jordan-ford, the Eben-Ezel and Eben-Ezer, the well in Shechem, the family festivals and national celebrations. By these visible witnesses and beautiful traditions the life of the Israelite was bound back to the past, and he inherited whatever of truth, warning, command and conscience his fathers could teach him. The old cairns, pillars, wells, customs and holy anniversaries were the perpetual reminders of a past evermore fused into the present, enlarging and enriching it.

Has human nature changed? Is the past a thing of naught to the self-sufficing generations of to-day? Have the gray old pillars the fathers set up, the customs they originated, the institutions they founded, the lives they led, no lessons for the later born? "There are those who think it narrowing to have anything to do with the past. But which is the broader man; he who fences out the past, and tries to cut himself wholly loose from it, who limits himself to the present, or he who includes both past and present in his thought and sympathy?" Certainly Christians, whose faith sweeps back to a salvation accomplished in the past, to the incarnation of their Saviour and the founding of their Church, cannot forget the former time. With reason, therefore, the Church constructs a Sacred Year and fills it with anniversaries and memorial seasons. Moved by this same pious impulse, this same veneration of the past, each

parish has its Lesser Year, with its local celebrations and remembrances. Naturally this year begins with the Founding. The month of parochial organization is the beginning of months—the first month of the parish year. For this Church February is the initial or memorial month. On the 13th of February, 1832, this parish was organized. How this month has been kept in the past, with what solemnity of worship and wealth of benevolence the recurring Februaries have been commemorated, it is not my purpose to inquire or report. Forty-nine of these anniversaries have just been numbered. A brief twelvemonth will usher in the FIFTIETH YEAR, usually esteemed a golden era, an epoch of peculiar honor. It will be the Mid-Century Anniversary, the Parish Year of Jubilee, and should be holy unto us.

There is ancient Christian precedent as well as Hebrew analogy for the due observance of the Festival of the Founding. The pious habit of consecrating or setting apart sacred edifices for the sole use of worship probably dates back to the earliest years of the Christian Church. It was certainly practiced in the reign of Constantine, and from his day has been a custom of obligation. In course of time the yearly remembrance of the date of consecration had a place among the parish anniversaries. Sozoman gives an instance of such a parish observance in connection with the Church of Jerusalem. The festival lasted eight days, during which time service was celebrated daily, and unusual interest was excited among par-

ishioners and strangers. Gregory the Great permitted the Church in England to add a new custom to the "Festival of Dedication," which consisted in the building of evergreen booths around the churches and the enjoyment therein of the festivities of the week. A trace of this old custom lingers in the now almost obsolete "Church-wakes" of rural Britain. Shorn of the picturesque accessories of an earlier and more dramatic piety, the annual observance of the *natalitia* of a parish in our day consists of hardly more than an "Annual Sermon," or the publication of a "Year Book" of parish statistics and work. The modern spirit, the Protestant depreciation of "old paths," and the crowding interests of social and business life are unfavorable to the survival of reverent customs and the frequent commemoration of sacred seasons. But the obligation of religious anniversaries and the stated remembrance of the past have not been wholly obliterated from the human mind and conscience. Hence, when some greater cycle rolls round, as a quarter or half century, the significance of time is seriously acknowledged, and there is a fresh and genuine interest in the memorials of the past. As a congregation we are approaching one of these memorable eras. On the 13th day of February next we shall number *fifty years* of corporate parish life. Human sentiment and churchly piety, as well as divine injunction, say: "Ye shall hallow the FIFTIETH YEAR. It shall be a JUBILEE unto you. It shall be holy unto you." An obligation with these powerful sanctions cannot be ignored. Its

roots run down to the most sacred instincts of our nature, and are nourished by the strongest elements of our faith. All that is within us joins the call to keep the Feast, and to mark with peculiar honor the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Parish. How shall this be done? First of all by the *preparation of the heart*. This is the fitting prelude for every solemnity of religion. It formed an important part of all the commemorations of the Elder Church. The royal Josiah, at the restoration of the Passover, said: "Prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, and stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the families. So kill the Passover and sanctify yourselves." The "man after God's own heart," looking forward to the dedication of the Temple his son should build, prayed that the people might be spiritually prepared for the great event. Moses prepared himself by a long fast for the reception of the Holy Commandments. By the same preparatory discipline our Blessed Lord was pleased to sanctify Himself for His pure ministry of love. The converted Paul tarried on the threshold of his eager work for the space of three preparatory years. These high examples emphasize the principle that spiritual preparation stands in the front of every religious act. The ancient Passover had its day of preparation. The Christian Easter is reverently approached through the forty days of Lent. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is always preceded by a warning, in order that the people may make themselves ready by a week of more fervent prayer and

watchfulness. In some churches a public preparatory lecture precedes the celebration. In the Liturgy of the Swiss Catholic Church * the office of the Holy Communion significantly opens with the beautiful Psalm of Preparation:

“ I will wash my hands in innocency,
O Lord; and so will I go to thine altar.”

After an act of penitence there is a nearer approach in the words of the 43d Psalm:

“ Priest,—I will go unto the altar of God.
People,—Even unto the God of my joy and gladness.”

This responsive service closes with the priest's fervent prayer:

“ Put away from us, we pray Thee, O Lord, our misdeeds, that we, with clean hearts, may worthily approach Thy holies of holies; through Christ our Lord.”

Very aptly does this liturgical preparation symbolize that long and practical making ready of the heart which alone can fit us for the right enjoyment of a holy season or the due commemoration of a great religious anniversary.

We may be aided in this preparation of heart for our Jubilee worship by the serious considerations of gratitude, duty and faith. We are grateful that God put it into the hearts of the fathers to found this parish. As Churchmen, we love the Church. It is for us the “pillar and ground of the truth.” Its creeds, its worship, its ministry were established by the Apostles, under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost. Into

* See Document No. VI., General Convention, 1880.

this Society have been born and out of it have died successive generations of saintly men and women. We judge no man who thinks he can serve God better in a sect of yesterday, but for us the associations of a venerable past, and the thought of organic unity with the historic Church, are spiritual forces in the development of a character worthy to transmit the saints' righteousness to those who are to come after. This conscious inheritance of the past and responsibility to the future presses solemnly upon a Churchman's heart, and therefore he rejoices when "God setteth the solitary in families,"—when Providence opens the way for the formation of a Church parish. Of such an association and visible organization we expect, in February next, to commemorate the Fiftieth Year. Passing over the history, we rejoice to-day in the fact. We congratulate ourselves that there is in this place a Church Font at which our children may be baptized, a Church Altar at which our souls may be "fed with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ," a Church Building in which the prayers and praises of the ages are still heard and the ancient creeds still reverently repeated, where our children may be confirmed and married, and from whence our dead may be borne away to Christian burial. Words can poorly express the gratitude that ought to fill the hearts of this people at the recollection of the early efforts that brought to them these holy privileges. There are isolated Churchmen in the spiritually waste places of the Diocese whose hearts would burn

within them at the bare mention of what we habitually enjoy. Sometimes the commonness or long continuance of blessings leads to their depreciation. Let it not be so with us; but let us daily acknowledge that our religious "lot is fallen to us in a fair ground; yea, we have a goodly heritage." Not boastfully, but with a joy chastened by the remembrance of unworthiness, let us

"Walk about *our* Zion, and go round about her,
And tell the towers thereof.
Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses,
That *we* may tell them that come after."

But the most glowing gratitude for the past will not of itself prepare our hearts for a truly religious celebration of our Parish Jubilee. Emotion is an unstable basis for worship. The thought of duty must go hand in hand with the thought of gladness. Consecration must prove itself by conduct. True and heaven-accepted worshipers must

——"lengthen out their litanies,
In duteous care for quick and dead."

No vainglorious admiration of our inheritance, no blind bigot's pride in our institutions can take the place of personal zeal in good works and a conscious sense of responsibility to God. Duty, loyalty, consecration,—these must be the watch-words of the heart that would adequately gather up the lessons of half a century, and with divine approval set up the pillar of a New Departure. We are debtors both to the past and to the present. We owe gratitude to the one; we owe service to

the other. But there is a preparation beyond gratitude, even beyond duty; a preparation that embraces mind as well as heart. I mean a genuine increase of faith; a stronger, warmer conviction of "the truth as it is in Jesus." This is the great debt we owe to the future. A faith that listlessly floats in the air cannot discharge this weighty obligation. A creed that does not touch life cannot benefit the coming generations, especially if they are to fall upon times of "distress and perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear." We owe to such a future a faith that has foundations, a faith that has practically helped men in the conduct of life; not an indifferent dogma, but a living BELIEF.* If we have caught the strong Saxon meaning of Belief, and are translating our creed into action, then we may rightly call to witness the coming years as we pour the festal oil of our commemorative worship upon another Stone in the long line of visible and invisible memorials stretching back to the rude pillar that Jacob set up in Luz. From the patriarch's day to ours the faith we still profess has survived. New faiths have arisen, waxed old as a garment and been quietly folded up; but the creed that was the strength of ancient Israel, and is now the hope and comfort of God's later Church, abides in perennial vigor. Its years have not failed. There were times when its integrity was threatened. It had to pass through the fire. But

*There is a grander sense in this old Saxon word than lies on the surface. Belief etymologically means, *by-live; that by which we live.*

these antagonisms kept it sweet and pure. Outwardly the struggle seems over. Physical persecution no longer tests our faith. The ordeal now lies in subtler and more deadly influences. With soft persuasions and confident logic we are led into misty paths that promise an opening into larger and lovelier life. Such is the "religion of humanity," in which Marcus Aurelius is canonized along with Christ, the "sweet Galilean vision" linked with the "Light of Asia," and the Shastra and Avesta ranked beside the Bible. It is an eirenicon of all religions; a creed of culture well pleasing to the intellect and imagination, but powerless to bring to the suffering human heart that comfort and hope, that faith and sense of Fatherhood, that forgiveness and consciousness of Sonship which it craves. It is a poetic *aber-glaube*, a sentimental rebuilding of the Athenian altar with its mystic inscription. Its influence is shallow and circumscribed. It need not alarm the Church. But our age has fallen on an antagonism of tremendous sweep and vigor in the bold, outspoken unbelief of men of science and letters. Poetic over-faiths do little harm; they are brushed aside in the stern crises of life; but philosophical doubt is deadly, and it is just in these stern crises that it has most power to curdle a weak faith. We cannot deny the increase of this destructive skepticism. The air is thickening with agnostic thought.

"Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown,
Question us now from star and stone;

Too little or too much we know,
And sight is swift and faith is low."

The Universities of Europe, once the pillars of the Church, are shaken. The very pulpits of the truth are wavering, even in the land of John Knox.

"The letters of the sacred Book
Glimmer and swim beneath our look."

Is it unwise to acknowledge this spread of unbelief? Does mention multiply doubt? It may be so in an unreading age, but to-day what is known in a corner is immediately proclaimed on the house-top. The press makes thought ubiquitous. The pulpit that ignores this condition of modern life, and proses over orthodox doctrines, while the people are drinking in deadly heresies, deftly woven in poems, essays, lectures, and even "Scotch Sermons," sadly mistakes its mission—to guard as well as feed the flock. Silence cannot stop skepticism. Faith must meet unfaith. Positive truth must be set against destructive error. The mightiness of conviction and the enthusiasm of souls that know no doubt must

"Strengthen the weak hands
And confirm the feeble knees,
And say unto them that are of a fearful heart,
Be strong, fear not."

What better preparation can we make for the approaching Festival than a strong re-affirmation of our Christian Creed? What holier duty can we discharge to the future than to come up to the celebration of Fifty Years of church life with an

increased and glowing confidence in the Gospel that has been the breath of that life? What more inspiring testimony can we leave to those who follow us than a hearty participation in the Jubilee worship of a Christian parish, whose standing or falling article is belief in a divine Christ? If, then, the faith of some seem to waver and their love toward Christ to grow cold, let our faith take firmer hold and our love take deeper fire, assured that if the righteous dead still speak, the air about us is full of dear voices saying, "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong." I am sure you will agree with me that this inward preparation of the heart, this ardent increase of gratitude, service and faith, should mark the twelve months that lie between us and the great Festival. But this inward preparation, if genuine, will seek outward expression. This expression may properly take the form of MEMORIALS, which shall be visible and lasting witnesses of How we Kept the Jubilee. The Memorials may be:

I. *The Memorial of Words.* We have a history—every parish has a history—well worth the writing. But it generally happens that only a vague tradition is handed down. It is true the Living Parish is in some measure a history of the past. It is the outcome of the trials, the mistakes, the successes of years ago. But we are interested in processes as well as results. A chronicle, then, of the planting and training of a parish, of its struggles and incidents, its means and methods of work, the buildings it has consecrated and the

lives of godly men and women, of missionaries and ministers that have been built into the spiritual edifice—such a chronicle ought to be of real interest and value. To fix and preserve the traditions of this parish, to tell the story of the Founding of Grace Church, and mark with all the fulness possible the successive ministries of her rectors and the faithful labors of her laity, will be the chief object of the Memorial of Words. The interest in these Reminiscences may not be wide; a parish history may have only a local value; but it ought not on that account to go unwritten. The more local attachment that can be fostered, the more sacred remembrances that can be kept alive, the better for the parish and the people. Surely we ought to learn something from the experience of those who trod the paths we all must tread, bore the sorrows and carried the burdens we all must shoulder. Life is essentially the same. As quaint old Burton says, "We weave the same web; we twist the same rope again and again." And yet we lose the sharp and wholesome impression of individual lives if we allow them to be merged in the general mass of past humanity. Personal histories, even of those best beloved, are easily forgotten in the "flood of years."

"The little waves with their soft, white hands,
Efface the foot-prints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls."

Hence the value of Biography. There is a stimulus, a warning, an encouragement, a spiritual enrichment in these scrip-

tures of human life, and we may glean noble lessons from the reminiscences of those whose names have never reached the great world. The simple annals of parish life, the brief memorials of the laymen who founded and the clergymen who ministered in this Church may be "foot-prints in the sands of time" well worth our following. Not to minister to our parochial pride, but to enlarge and deepen our knowledge and faith the Memorial History will be written. To it will be added, if possible, half-century sketches of the general Church and of this and the old diocese, together with other papers appropriate to the occasion. I hope to secure the help of able pens in this important literary work. Should the Publication Fund warrant it, all these Memorial Papers will be fairly printed and bound in a Jubilee Volume.

II. *The Memorial of Sacrifice.* It is well to preserve in words the history of half a century of parish life. But surely our commemorative worship will seek a profounder expression. Words are cheap. Worship must be costly. The Christian has as deep reason as the Hebrew to say: "Neither will I offer . . . unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." Ours is a religion of *sacrifice*. The cross is its true symbol. Life under such a cognizance means something more than lip-loyalty to a creed. There must be the submission of the will and the consecration of the heart. Doubtless this costly gift of personal religion, this offering of a character meet for the kingdom of heaven, is the best Memo-

rial we can bring before the Lord to add value in His eyes to our festal worship. But He has also ordained that this spiritual offering shall be made in a comely manner and symbolized through costly material. Therefore we ought to distinguish our Jubilee Year with a Memorial that may be seen—with gifts that really cost us something. I would specify,—

1. The Gift of Gold. In married life the Fiftieth is the golden year. It is then the Golden Wedding is celebrated. And may we not, in view of the mystical analogy of marriage to the union between Christ and His Church, fittingly commemorate the Quinquagesimal Anniversary as the Golden Wedding of this Church to the Divine Bridegroom? The gift should be of GOLD. It should be the sacrifice of precious gold—gold that is invaluable with holy associations, gold that has belonged to the sainted dead. I would suggest that on Easter Day an offering be made of this most fine gold,—the cherished heirlooms, the hoarded coins and jewelry that it will cost effort to part with. If we truly love the Bridegroom we shall count it joy to make the sacrifice. Enough of these precious relics ought to be offered to make, when melted together, a broad plate of gold for the Paten on which the consecrated Bread, the symbol of the Bridegroom's broken Body, might always lie whenever the Holy Supper is kept by the Bride.

2. The Gift of Silver. This, too, is a precious metal, and its gift may express the same spirit of sacrifice. There are

old pieces of silver in many homes that no money could buy. The thought of the dear vanished hands that touched them would make it hard, very hard, to yield them up. It is for this very reason of costliness that I suggest an offering of silver on All Saints' Day. Out of this choice silver the base of the Paten and the other Sacramental Vessels might be fashioned.

3. The Gifts of Fine Linen, Purple and Scarlet. If there are those who cannot offer piously hoarded gold and silver, they may bring hangings for lectern and pulpit, or a fair linen cloth for the Holy Table. These should be the best of their kind, in order that, in the words of Ruskin, they may "in the same compass present more cost and more thought." For Frontals and Super-Frontals, Antependiums and Markers I care little, unless they mean *sacrifice added to ornament*. But when wrought by those who lack silver and gold, but are rich in humble love for the Master, then, like the Virgin's pigeons, the smallest bit of embroidered cloth becomes infinitely precious because of the sacrifice it represents.

4. The Gift of Money to Extinguish the Rectory Debt. If the gifts already enumerated appeal to religious sentiment, this appeals to a very sturdy religious principle, viz., "Owe no man anything." Debt is an ugly, unchristian thing. It ought never to be contracted by man or parish, except under the stress of most urgent necessity. Having been assumed, it should be paid as soon as possible, however much of sacrifice the payment may cost. The debt that lies upon one of the parish

buildings offers an opportunity to mark our Jubilee Year with a very real Memorial of Sacrifice, in the cost of which every man, woman and child can participate, according to the ability of each. With what gladness we should all come up to the Festival, if, with the announcement of the services, there could be coupled the notice that Three Thousand Dollars had been gathered as the accumulated sacrifice of money during the year. With what a thrill of holy pride Grace Parish would enter its second half-century, "owing no man anything." It may be said we are not able to offer the costly Memorial of an unencumbered church property. It is true we are not able to offer it out of our abundance. We should have to adopt the Hebrew's principle: "Neither will I offer . . . unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." There are those among us who do honor this rule. They are constantly denying themselves some luxury and cutting off some selfish indulgence for the Church's sake. If *every member* of the parish will go and do likewise, the Rectory can be freed in twelve months. In a wealthy parish one or two offerings at stated times might realize the needed sum, but with us there must be systematic and constant offering all through the year. *Everybody* must give, and give *all the time*. It must be a conscientious and consecrated effort, "begun, continued and ended for the glory of God." It must be religion in act. Prayer must inspire benevolence. If the year seem scantied of luxuries and marked with self-denials, regard it as a financial Fast

before the Feast. Like the Church coming up from the wilderness of Lent at Eastertide, the pain and abstinence will no longer be remembered for the joy that our Zion is free from debt and adorned as a Bride for the Heavenly Bridegroom. Call this the Church Savings Year. Let every one make some genuine sacrifice. Go without a new overcoat, a new dress, a new carpet. Make a shorter pleasure trip in summer. Save in trifles. Put by the small amounts. Do not look upon this as an indifferent thing, but as a real obligation. Have the Savings Box always in sight, and conscientiously regard it as the Lord's Treasury. These gatherings will cost thought and liberality in all our families; but we will all be the richer for the sacrifice, and the happier, too. Next year will be a free year, and we can spend upon ourselves with more honest satisfaction.

III. *The Memorial of Piety.* In its original sense piety means love of kin, affectionate respect for the elders, and—in its highest expression—tender veneration for

“Parents passed into the skies.”

So sacred among all men is this filial obligation, so well pleasing to God its observance, so suggestive of divine worship, that a holier significance has overshadowed the word, and *piety* has become a familiar synonym for religion. I venture, however, to use it awhile in the old, etymological sense, because I think it is permitted us at this time to mingle a tender, human sentiment with religious interest and gratitude.

I think we may remember the personal ties as well as the Church work of the half-century. Doubtless the Memorial History should have to do with persons chiefly as God's servants, and the Memorial Offerings should have regard to "an holy worship" and parish liberation from debt, but it cannot be wrong to perpetuate the names and virtues of the revered dead in some visible gift, which, while primarily consecrated to God's glory or the Church's use, will also serve as a Memorial of Piety—a visible token of an invisible, deathless human love. The half-century Roll of the Dead is a long one, including

"Both young men and maidens,
Old men and children."

There are few families among us that have not some precious name on the list, and there are some names dear to the whole Church-family, because for a time they were at the head of the family as fathers in the Gospel, as pastors and ensamples to the flock. The Church walls already bear Tablets to the memory of DUANE, DALRYMPLE and ABRAMS. Is not this a proper time to get ready other Memorials to testify to affectionate individual reverence as we recall at the Mid-Century Anniversary the general history of the past? Any article of chancel furniture or ritual use may be presented in memory of a loved one. A tile pavement may be laid in the sanctuary, a tablet of brass affixed to the wall, or a chime of bells hung in the tower. Coverings of brodered work may be given, or a brazen alms-basin, or a piece of sacramental silver. I sug-

gest, however, that the most appropriate and solemnly beautiful gift of piety would be Memorial Windows. Church windows seem designed to shut out our view of the world around and open our eyes to the world beyond. They admit only

“——a dim religious light,”

and thus dispose the heart to heavenly meditations. The colors are the richest that art can give, and the subjects represented are the most awe-inspiring and faith-kindling scenes from the Old and New Testaments, or the solitary figure of an Apostle, Prophet or Holy Woman, whose lives are a perpetual inspiration,

“Sweet with all sainthood, cleansed in martyr fires.”

These glowing windows are thus transfigured into luminous parables and paraphrases of our faith. Why should they not also commemorate those of our own households who have lived out that faith in a godly walk and conversation, and have now entered upon its unspeakable fruition? Would not the enrichment of the Church with these lovely and expressive windows, bearing the names of founders, clergymen, saintly women, godly men and innocent children, forever suggest to those who come after the spiritual loveliness, richness of character and innocence of life that made these, and must make them “meet for the kingdom of heaven?” Time was when piety held a genuine sway in men’s hearts. The old churches of Europe are crowded with monuments and votive offerings to names once held dear. We have no personal interest in the

men and women of a former time, but we are still awed when we enter the solemn abbey or the simple village church. St. Paul's resurrection hymn seems written all around us on "storied window" and monumental brass and marble. The experience of Jacob comes into our souls, "Surely the Lord is in this place,"—the Lord of the quick and the dead. Our country, our age, our religion lack reverence, and will lack it as long as God is kept out of our constitutions, religious sentiment dissevered from national art, and our churches kept bare of those visible tokens that silently testify to our faith in the unseen world, and teach us that the living and the dead form one Communion, bound by unbroken ties to the throne of the Living God.

Will not you who have long ago or recently lost cherished members of your families consider whether you cannot offer a Window or some other Memorial of Piety?

Were it possible to accomplish so much I would urge, as the completion of the gifts, the crowning *Memorial of Beauty*. By this I mean such coloring and decoration of walls, arches and ceiling, such covering of the floor and enrichment of the chancel as would transform this staring, blank interior into a reverential Church, whose devout atmosphere would melt the "frozen music" of architecture into melodious worship, forever chanting to the inner ear,—

"This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

But Beauty can wait until Honesty, Duty and Piety have made their Memorial offerings.

In conclusion I affirm these Fifty Years of the past, rich with the accumulated records of lives that have fulfilled their tasks and do now rest from their labors, blossoming with the fadeless memories of modest self-denials and loving, patient endurance, are worth commemorating in solemn service in printed book, in gifts of gold, in tablets of brass, in windows of price and spire of stone. These are golden legacies to the future. They testify to the worth of character too precious to be forgotten, and to the pious liberality of the living. Look at yonder spire, lifting itself above the surrounding roofs, seen from every hill-top, radiant with the morning's gold, flushed by the evening red, darkling in the midnight air, unmoved by storms and defiant to all the winds that blow,—look at it, and tell me if that weight of stone does not testify to a generation fast dying out, and, better still, to a generation fast coming on—of the weight of Christian character in giving to life its truest solidity and success? Tell me if that aspiring uprightness and graceful outline speak nothing of the moral uprightness and spiritual symmetry of a consecrated heart? Tell me if yonder stone cross, the topmost stone of all, does not forever symbolize to the restless crowd below that the Faith of the Cross is the crown and finish of every true life? One family has in this spire “forereached the Festival.” There remains, however, the placing of a tablet in the vestibule, which, to-

gether with contemplated memorial frescoes, will mark the character of this pious monument and link its completion with the Quinquagesimal Anniversary. Seeing what lessons we may learn from what has been done, shall not other families, shall not the parish-family "add thought to building," and commemorate in every reverent and lovely way the Founding of the Parish, and the lives that have adorned it? Such a commemoration will tend, I think, to increase parish vitality, develop churchly breadth and sympathies, bind closer family ties, and stimulate all classes and ages to larger usefulness and better growth in the auspicious future. Believe me, there is strength in old associations, in common bonds to a revered past. The possession of a time-honored inheritance brings a sense of responsibility, and a noble pride labors to transmit the trust augmented and adorned to the on-coming heirs. Our years of tenantry include a memorable epoch in the Church at large as well as in the parish. We have just crossed the threshold of a wider and deeper Church life. Behind us lie the prejudices, the narrow views, the divided interests and sad disloyalties of the old churchmanship. Before us open the mutual appreciation, the hearty co-operation, the fraternal charity, the reverent spirit, the richer worship and deeper spiritual life of the new churchmanship.

Stimulated by the examples that were in this place faithful to their day and generation, instructed by the fuller, sweeter influences that flow around us in a unified and advancing

Church, we ought, in deep gratitude, to prepare our hearts and get ready our offerings for a glad and generous celebration of the Parish Year of Jubilee.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE VESTRY.

At a regular meeting of the Vestry of Grace Church, Honesdale, Pa., held on Monday, February 28, 1881, the following Minute was unanimously adopted and ordered to be engrossed on the Records:

MINUTE.

The Wardens and Vestrymen of Grace Church cordially concur in the Rector's "Call to Commemorate the Founding of the Parish" on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the same.

They endorse the recommendation that individuals or the collective parish present, on the Fiftieth Year, offerings of beauty and value for Church use or as Memorials of those who, having finished their work in this parish, do now rest from their labors.

They especially approve the suggestion to free the Rectory from debt by a special Memorial Fund, and authorize the appointment of a Committee to report a plan of subscription and other methods for the collection of the Fund.

They furthermore concur in the proposal to publish a Memorial Volume containing the historical sermons and other papers read or presented at the Jubilee Services, and authorize the creation of a Publication Fund under the direction of the Rector.

Finally, the Wardens and Vestrymen pledge to the Rector their individual interest and hearty co-operation throughout the year in the accomplishment of the above suggestions, and any other that may bear upon the success of the Semi-Centennial Commemoration.

A LETTER TO FORMER PARISHIONERS.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD:

Presuming that your attachment to Grace Church has not grown cold, and that your interest in her history and welfare is unabated, I venture to send you this "Call to Commemorate the Founding of the Parish" on the Semi-Centennial Anniversary, February 13, 1882. I beg that you will read the Sermon carefully, and catch the spirit it seeks to enkindle—the spirit of personal consecration and the spirit of sacrifice—as the truest preparation for the coming Celebration. You are cordially invited to be present, share in our festal worship and unite with your old friends in making material offerings in commemoration of the Fiftieth or Jubilee Year of this parish. Any of the Gifts enumerated in the Sermon, including the gift of money in any amount to apply on the Rectory debt, that you may feel disposed to offer to the glory of God and in remembrance of former parochial ties, will be gratefully received. Correspondence is invited. Praying that you may be blest in your Church and in your homes, being filled with all spiritual benediction and grace, I am

Faithfully your brother in Christ,

T. F. CASKEY, *Rector.*

